IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for proxying data access commands from a first stor-
age system to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, ~~the method~~ comprising
~~the steps of~~:

    in response to a failure in communication between a client and the second storage
system, receiving, at a proxy port on the first storage system, a data access command at
the first storage system that is directed to the second storage system;

    forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a
cluster interconnect;

    processing the data access command at the second storage system;

    returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via
the cluster interconnect; and

    sending a response to the data access command to ~~a~~ the client from the first stor-
age system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the storage systems are storage
appliances ~~and wherein the data access command is received at a proxy port associated~~
~~with the first storage appliance~~.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port as-
sociated with a physical port.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises requested read
data.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises an acknowledge-
ment of a write operation.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises a predetermined set
of read data.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a direct
link between the first storage system and the second storage system.

9. -16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A method for proxying data access commands in a first stor-
age system to a second system in a storage system cluster, ~~the method~~ comprising the
~~steps of~~:
    in response to a failure in communication between a client and the second storage
system, receiving, at a proxy port on the first storage system, a data access command at
the first storage system that is directed to the second storage system;
    analyzing a received data access command at the first storage system~~,~~;
    forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system; and
    processing the received data access command at the second storage system.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 further comprising ~~the steps of~~:
    returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system;
and
    sending a response to the data access command to the client from the first storage
system.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the step of forwarding further comprises ~~the step of~~ forwarding the data access command to the second storage system via a cluster interconnect.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a fibre channel link.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a direct link between the first storage system and the second storage system.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~22~~ 17 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~22~~ 17 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port associated with the physical port.

25. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises requested read data.

26. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises an acknowledgement of the write operation.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer readable ~~medium~~ media, including program instructions executing on a computer, for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the computer readable ~~medium~~ media including instructions for performing the steps of:

5   in response to a failure in communication between a client and the second storage

6   system, receiving, at a proxy port on the first storage system, a data access command at

7   the first storage system that is directed to the second storage system;

8   forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a

9   cluster interconnect;

10   processing the data access command at the second storage system;

11   returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via

12   the cluster interconnect; and

13   sending a response to the data access command to a the client from the first stor-

14   age system.

1   28. (Currently Amended) A system for proxying data access commands from a first

2   storage system to a second storage system connected via a cluster interconnect, the sys-

3   tem comprising:

4   in response to a failure in communication between a client and the second storage

5   system, means for receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is di-

6   rected to the second storage system;

7   means for forwarding the received data access command to the second storage

8   system via a cluster interconnect;

9   means for processing the data access command at the second storage system;

10   means for returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage

11   system via the cluster interconnect; and

12   means for sending a response to the data access command to a the client from the

13   first storage system.

1   29. (Currently Amended) The method system of claim 28 wherein storage systems are

2   storage appliances and the data access command is received at a proxy port associated

3   with the first storage appliance.

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

31. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port associated with a physical port.

32. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 28 wherein the response comprises requested read data.

33. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 28 wherein the response comprises an acknowledgement of a write operation.

34. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 28 wherein the response comprises a predetermined set of read data.

34. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ system of claim 28 wherein the response comprises a predetermined set of read data.

35. (Currently Amended) A method for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising:

in response to a failure in communication between a client and the second storage system, receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the second storage system;

forwarding a data access command from the first storage system to the second storage system;

processing the data access command at the second storage system; and

returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprises sending a response to the data access command from the first storage system.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 wherein the data access command is forwarded via a cluster interconnect.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprises receiving by the first storage system the data access command that is directed to the second storage system.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35 further comprises returning the response from the first storage system to a client.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39 wherein the response is returned via the cluster interconnect.

1 Please add claims 41 *et al.*

1 41. (New) A method for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to a
2 second storage system in a storage system cluster, comprising:
3   receiving a data access command at the first storage system;
4   determining the data access command was received at a proxy port on the first
5 storage system;
6   passing the data access command to a local virtual adapter;
7   forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a
8 cluster interconnect;
9   processing the data access command at the second storage system;
10   returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via
11 the cluster interconnect; and
12   sending a response to the data access command to a client from the first storage
13 system.

1 42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the data access command is directed to the
2 second storage system.

1 43. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

1 44. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port.

1 45. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the first storage system receives the data ac-
2 cess command in response to a communication failure between the client and the second
3 storage system.

1 46. (New) A system for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to a
2 second storage system in a storage system cluster, comprising:

3   a proxy port on the first storage system, the proxy port to receive a data access

4   command that is directed to the second storage system in response to a failure in commu-

5   nication between a client and the second storage system;

6   a local virtual adapter on the first storage system, the local virtual adapter to for-

7   ward the received data access command to the second storage system via a cluster inter-

8   connect;

9   a processor on the second storage system, the processor configured to process the

10   data access command at the second storage system;

11   a partner virtual adapter on the second storage system, the partner virtual adapter

12   to return a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via the

13   cluster interconnect; and

14   a network adapter to send a response to the data access command to a client from

15   the first storage system.

1   47. (New) The system of claim 46, wherein the first storage system further comprises a

2   local virtual target module to determine the data access command was received at a proxy

3   port on the first storage system, and the local virtual target module to pass the data access

4   command to the local virtual adapter.

1   48. (New) The system of claim 46, wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.

1   49. (New) The system of claim 46, wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port.